

Rebeca Saray Griego
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The opportunity of a lifetime is the only way I can describe DC.

After eight humid weeks in our nation's capitol, I am lost for words to truly describe the experience and how grateful I am to have had this opportunity. As a woman of color to have been in DC during the 2017 summer was an absolute rollercoaster of emotions.



I always knew I wanted to build and design things. I later realized that was what engineers do, and my pursuit for an engineering degree began. For years now I have known what and how I was going to get to my final goal of becoming an astronaut. I never in my life imagined that in my crazy journey to one day reach Mars, I would intern in Washington, DC for a summer.

I still remember the day I went into my CAMP office at CSULB and asked if this internship was worth the try because of my major. I was surprised with their answer, I remember Carolina telling me “Apply mija, you never know.” Fast forward to August 2017, and I have finished the internship with an immeasurable amount of experiences. From walking through the hallways of Congress, to walking in and out of the Department of Education every day, to taking the DC Metro to get home.

During this last week in DC I have not stopped! We arrived back from New York on Sunday night and had to be up and early Monday morning for the Annual Directors Meeting (ADM). Being in the room as the meeting took place was very eye-opening. Everyone in the room is working for the same cause, to improve education for migrant families. It is a very important job all the HEP and CAMP Directors have, and it was a pleasure to meet some of them.

Thursday I said goodbye to the Department of Education. For two months it was my home from 9 am to 5 am. While being at the department I was able to sit at the same table as the Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, and most importantly work with the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. It was an honor to assist Emmanuel Caudillo. After the work day, I walked across the street to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum one last time.



Friday was the calm after the storm. We gathered at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) office and said our goodbyes. It was a pleasure to meet every CHCI intern. I wish them the best and hope all of their dreams come true.

I think Saturday came quicker than we all expected. It was an early start turn in our keys, say goodbye, and run to the metro one last time to arrive at the airport. It was a bittersweet moment saying goodbye to Abi and Gloria. But our time has arrived, it was time to go back into the world and and put into action all we had learned.



To all the staff at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, it was a pleasure to be part of the family. Thank you so much for all the doors that were opened to us, CAMP students. Every Friday I learned something new, things I didn't even know I wanted to learn about.

To Emmanuel Caudillo at the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, thank you for the opportunity to intern with the initiative. Through this difficult and confusing time in DC you are taking command of the initiative and pushing forward. I hope my work was helpful, and I am very excited to see it used for the Hispanic Heritage Month. Thank you for trusting me and giving me space to be creative.

To Irene Bueno and her NVG team, thank you. Thank you for your hospitality while we were in DC. Most importantly thank you for representing the HEP and CAMP association, as well as the United Farm Workers.

To Gieve Kashkooli, from the United Farm Workers (UFW), thank you for allowing us to join you for hill visits. Each one of us have a powerful story and you allowed us to share it. Also, thank you for your work with the UFW.

To the HEP/CAMP Association, thank you for changing my life.
Patrick, thank you for all of your help, DC would not have been the same without you.
California State University, Long Beach CAMP, thank you for allowing me to representing you, it was a pleasure.

Looking back on the past eight weeks, there is not a thing I would change about it. All of the valuable knowledge I gained and the friendships I made I will never forget. I am truly blessed to have had this opportunity which has completely changed my life. I still want to be an astronaut and I will continue pursuing my degree in Mechanical Engineering, but now I will also be a constituent. I will vote, and call my representative so issues that matter to me matter to whoever is representing me in DC.



To Abi, Gloria, Bianca, Jose, Lupe, and Carlos, Gracias! Thank you for sharing your stories and struggles with me. I wish every single one of you the best wherever life takes you. I can not wait to see what you all accomplish.

-Rebeca Saray Griego
August 5, 2017